

2024 Annual Report



**JUSTICE
POLICY
INSTITUTE**

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Introduction

Founded in 1997, the Justice Policy Institute (JPI) is a national nonprofit organization developing workable solutions to problems plaguing juvenile and criminal justice systems. Our research and analyses identify effective programs and policies. We disseminate our findings to the media, policymakers, and advocates and provide training and technical assistance to people working for justice reform.

We believe in a data-driven, community-centered, and collaborative approach to criminal legal reform. We ground our work in the belief that public safety comes from equity, opportunity, and community-based solutions—not from over-reliance on incarceration. By using data, centering impacted communities, and building broad coalitions, we challenge harmful narratives and advance policies that create lasting change.

Mission:

Justice Policy Institute is dedicated to reducing the use of incarceration and the justice system by promoting fair and effective policies.

Vision:

Justice Policy Institute envisions a society with safe, equitable and healthy communities just and effective solutions to social problems, and the use of incarceration only as a last resort.

Values:

-  Honesty
-  Equity
-  Compassion
-  Collaboration
-  Disruption

Our Approach



Drive Reform with Data

JPI conducts rigorous research and policy analysis to drive reform and counter punitive policies that harm communities. Through timely reports, issue briefs, and data visualizations, we equip advocates and policymakers with tools to challenge misinformation and promote evidence-based solutions. We track legislative developments and justice trends to ensure that reform stays rooted in facts—not fear. Our work connects research and advocacy, making complex data actionable to advance systemic change.



Center Impacted Voices

JPI puts those directly impacted by the criminal legal system at the center of change. We build teams that include system-impacted leaders and collaborate with incarcerated individuals, returning citizens, and grassroots groups to ensure firsthand experiences shape our policy work. Through strategic partnerships, public engagement, and leadership development, we elevate directly impacted voices and shift the narrative from punishment to accountability, opportunity, and healing.



Build Strategic Partnerships

JPI acts as a bridge among communities, researchers, policymakers, and advocates to foster collaboration and drive meaningful change. We convene coalitions, host strategic forums, and strengthen cross-sector partnerships to ensure reform efforts are aligned, inclusive, and impactful. Together, we're building a criminal legal system rooted in fairness, equity, and community investment.

Letter from Board of Directors

In a year defined by unprecedented political division, renewed attacks on youth justice, and the growing use of punitive responses to social challenges, the Justice Policy Institute's work is more vital than ever.

For nearly three decades, JPI has been a trusted voice for reform, offering clear analysis, credible research, and practical solutions. We produce impactful research, advance meaningful legislation, and uplift the voices of those most affected by the criminal legal system.

We were proud to welcome Jasmine L. Tyler as JPI's new Executive Director, whose leadership marks both a homecoming and a new chapter for the organization. Earlier in her career, Jasmine worked at JPI as the research director. Now, she returns with more than two decades of experience, ready to guide the organization she helped shape into its next era of impact.

Under her leadership, JPI has already helped remove discriminatory barriers for crime survivors in Maryland, supported the creation of independent oversight for Maryland's prison system, and laid the foundation for developmentally appropriate responses to emerging adults in Washington, DC.

JPI also expanded its Board of Directors this past year, welcoming six new members who bring a wide range of expertise in law, advocacy, philanthropy, and community organizing. Their insight and leadership will help guide the organization's continued growth and sharpen its focus in the years ahead.

JPI remains grounded in its mission to create a justice system rooted in equity, dignity, and care. With strong leadership and a clear vision, the organization is well positioned to continue driving progress where it is most needed.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support.

In solidarity,
The Justice Policy Institute Board of Directors

Letter from Leadership

Returning to the Justice Policy Institute this year felt like coming home. JPI was where I began my career in justice reform, as a young researcher driven by curiosity, urgency, and a deep desire to challenge the systems that harmed my family and so many others. To now serve as Executive Director is an honor that brings my journey full circle, and one I embrace with immense gratitude and purpose.

We stepped into 2024 during a time of increasing political division and a troubling return to punitive responses to complex social issues. At JPI, we responded with urgency and focus.

This year, we helped eliminate discriminatory barriers to support for crime survivors in Maryland, including a reporting rule that excluded many Black male victims. We played a key role in creating independent oversight of Maryland's prison system. In Washington, DC, our report on emerging adults laid out a roadmap for new approaches to community safety and its recommendations began to shape policy. Through it all, we produced timely research, convened powerful conversations, and elevated the voices of those too often left out of decision-making.

These accomplishments reflect the strength of JPI's legacy. For more than twenty years, this organization has helped set the national agenda on youth and criminal justice reform. It is built on trust, collaboration, and a belief that public safety must come from equity, care, and opportunity.

As we look ahead to 2025, we are ready. Ready to deepen our impact, build stronger coalitions, and continue challenging systems that fail our communities. I am proud to lead this work, and I am grateful to our team, and every person and partner who makes it possible.

Thank you for walking with us.

With gratitude,
Jasmine L. Tyler
Executive Director
Justice Policy Institute

2024 at a Glance

In 2024, the Justice Policy Institute advanced its mission to create equitable, humane justice systems through bold advocacy, research, and public engagement.

From celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act to championing parole reform and alternatives to excessive prison terms, JPI elevated critical issues through coalition building, storytelling, and policy leadership. Throughout the year, JPI led public education campaigns, published influential research and policy reports, and partnered with communities to challenge incarceration's root causes and break the cycles of crime. We closed the year celebrating milestones like our new Healing and Hope Fund and President Biden's commutations, all while laying the groundwork for further transformative reforms in 2025.

- **Commemorating 50 Years of the JJDPA** - Marked the anniversary of the landmark national youth justice law, which created an office within the Department of Justice to focus on decreasing the number of incarcerated young people. JPI launched an infographic series and participated in national events and a featured panel at the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Conference.
- **Driving Parole and Sentencing Reform** - Advocated for second chances through policy forums like the Maryland Legislative Retreat and elevated reforms addressing long prison terms and parole system inequities.
- **Amplifying Impacted Voices** - Centered first-person narratives in panels, film screenings, and webinars—including Kemba and One Million Experiments—spotlighting lived experience as a driver of meaningful policy change.
- **Championing Emerging Adults** - Partnered with Columbia University's Emerging Adult Justice Project and released Building a Brighter Future to advance more compassionate responses and reduce long-term harm for justice-involved young adults.
- **Investing in Safer Communities** - Published The Right Investment 2.0 and launched an interactive Baltimore map to illustrate how targeted investments—not incarceration—builds real community safety.
- **Advocating for Accountability and Justice** - Promoted oversight in Maryland prisons, improved responses to crime survivors, and opposed federal threats to DC youth justice through coordinated campaigns and strategic publications.
- **Expanding Access to Reentry Support** - Released a DC Reentry Services Guidebook and Organizational Directory to connect returning residents with critical local resources and community programs.

Turning Advocacy into Impact

In 2024, the Justice Policy Institute worked alongside directly impacted people, community partners, and lawmakers to advance policies that center equity, safety, and accountability. From defending local autonomy in Washington, DC to reforming Maryland's prison oversight and compensation for crime survivors, JPI helped shape and pass legislation that responds to systemic failures with community-informed solutions.

Improving Responses to Crime Survivors

The criminal legal system often fails everyone it touches, including those who have survived violent crime. For years, JPI has worked to ensure that survivors receive the care, support and resources they deserve.

In 2024, JPI convened a series of community conversations in Baltimore with firearm crime survivors, many of whom described being left without adequate services or support. These conversations made it clear that the systems meant to help crime survivors were not working, especially for Black men in communities most affected by violence.

In response, JPI partnered with advocates and Maryland lawmakers to reform the state's Criminal Injuries Compensation Board, which had some of the lowest approval rates for compensation in the country. The process was deeply flawed, with requirements like reporting crimes to law enforcement within 48 hours disproportionately excluding Black male gunshot victims in places like Baltimore City and Prince George's County.

In May 2024, Governor Wes Moore signed new legislation that eliminated the 48-hour rule and addressed other long-standing barriers. This reform represents a critical shift toward a more equitable and survivor-centered approach, acknowledges the real experiences of people harmed by violence, and works to meet their needs.

JPI is proud to have played a key role in making this reform possible and will continue fighting for systems that offer care, not further harm, to survivors.

Enhancing Oversight and Transparency in Maryland's Prisons

Maryland's prison system has long lacked meaningful oversight, leading to unsafe conditions, due process violations, and poor outcomes for incarcerated people and correctional staff alike. For years, JPI has worked to change that by pushing for greater transparency and accountability.

In 2024, that work paid off. JPI joined forces with advocates and policymakers to successfully support legislation establishing the Office of the Correctional Ombudsman. This independent entity is tasked with monitoring prison conditions, investigating complaints, and ensuring humane treatment inside correctional facilities.

Signed into law in May 2024, the new office is a trusted resource for incarcerated individuals and their families. It also creates a pathway for reforms by identifying systemic failures and pushing for policy and practice improvements that protect safety, fairness, and human dignity.

This victory affirms JPI's ongoing commitment to structural reform. A just system must be transparent and accountable. This new oversight office is an important step in that direction.

Building Better Responses to Emerging Adults

The Justice Policy Institute continues to lead national efforts to transform how systems respond to emerging adults, which includes young people ages 18 to 24 who are too often caught between youth and adult legal systems. Rather than defaulting to punishment, JPI champions developmentally appropriate, community-based solutions that promote healing, stability, and long-term success.

In 2024, JPI released *Building a Brighter Future: A Plan to Invest in DC's Emerging Adults*, a comprehensive blueprint for improving public safety by supporting young adults. Drawing on local data and the lived experiences of directly impacted youth, the report outlines actionable strategies for workforce development, housing access, violence prevention, and diversion.

One of the report's key recommendations is the creation of a Director of Emerging Adult Services. This recommendation was passed into law in the Secure DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2024. Though the position remains unfunded, the inclusion reflects recognition of the need for targeted investment in this age group. JPI continues to advocate for full funding and implementation of the report's recommendations to ensure that DC moves toward evidence-based and developmentally appropriate solutions for emerging adults.

The report also served as a centerpiece at two major national convenings. In Boston, JPI staff joined Columbia University's Emerging Adult Justice Project for a multi-state summit focused on policy alignment and innovation. Paul Ashton, Deputy Executive Director, presented JPI's work, while Seaira Wainaina, Associate, participated in collaborative sessions with peers from across the country.

JPI also played a leadership role at *From Silos to Solutions*, a gathering hosted by the See Forever Foundation and Maya Angelou Schools. Paul Ashton co-led a workshop on coordinated support for justice-involved young adults, while Executive Director Jasmine Tyler delivered a keynote urging stakeholders to reimagine how systems can truly serve youth.

Through these engagements, JPI continues to shape the national conversation about emerging adults and helps ensure this often overlooked and misunderstood group receives the attention and support they deserve.

Advancing Youth Justice Reform

JPI remains deeply committed to youth justice reform, championing policies that prioritize diversion, rehabilitation, and trauma-informed care over incarceration. In 2024, JPI continued to share in thought leadership, support reforms, and shape narratives that protect and empower young people.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the national Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), JPI released a six-part infographic series highlighting the law's evolution and impact, including partnering with Unlock the Box and Solitary Watch to raise awareness of the negative consequences of youth solitary confinement. The final installment, focused on the future of youth justice, was launched in tandem with the OJJDP 2024 National Conference on Youth Justice, where JPI staff joined national leaders to explore emerging strategies and reaffirm the importance of strong federal protections for youth.

JPI also contributed to the *Say It Loud: Narrative Summit*, co-hosted by Thrive Under 25, Every Student Every Day, and the Youth Justice Project. Seaira Wainaina and Paul Ashton engaged with young advocates to explore alternative visions of youth safety grounded in care and community investment.

As part of its broader efforts, JPI continues to serve in the Public Information Officers Learning Collaborative, supporting juvenile justice and child welfare agencies in developing more accurate and supportive messaging about system-involved youth. JPI was also invited to join the District of Columbia's Juvenile Justice Advisory Group, an advisory commission to the Mayor and key stakeholders on matters related to juvenile justice, further embedding JPI's expertise in local policy decisions.

Together, these efforts reflect JPI's ongoing commitment to a youth justice system that centers humanity, opportunity, and the full potential of every young person.

Defending DC's Autonomy and Protecting Youth Justice

In 2024, JPI played a leading role in the fight against the DC CRIMES Act, one of the most serious threats to Washington, DC's home rule in decades. If passed, the bill would have stripped the DC Council of its power to amend criminal penalties and imposed harmful restrictions on youth justice protections.

Among the bill's most troubling provisions were efforts to lower the age cap for Youth Offender Status from 24 to 18 and eliminate a requirement for public reporting of juvenile crime statistics. The measures would have reinforced harmful narratives and undermined rehabilitation.

In response, JPI co-led a strategic coalition with the Council for Court Excellence to mobilize support against the bill. The group engaged in regular planning sessions with congressional allies, including the office of Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton. Through this coordinated effort, the coalition persuaded Congresswoman Norton to withdraw a proposed amendment that spotlighted provisions around the Youth Rehabilitation Act – avoiding a potential flashpoint for increased federal intervention.

The fight against the DC CRIMES Act demonstrated the power of informed, coordinated advocacy and the critical role of local leadership in protecting progressive criminal justice reforms. JPI remains committed to defending DC's autonomy and ensuring that youth justice remains rooted in care, not control and punishment.

Next Generation of Advocates

We believe in investing in the next generation of justice advocates. JPI not only partnered with the Georgetown University Policy Innovation Lab and Georgetown Undergraduate Legal Project, but continues to offer a robust internship experience. In fact, two of JPI's current staff members, Paul Ashton and Seaira Wainaina, first joined the organization as interns before coming on board full-time. Our internship program is designed to offer meaningful work experiences and leadership development opportunities to undergraduate and masters students and recent graduates who are passionate about criminal legal and juvenile legal reform. Interns support our team with legal research, policy analysis, and digital communications.

Our interns contribute to our official blog, informing policymakers, partners, and the media about fair and evidence-based justice reforms.

The Promise of Higher Education in Prison: Pell Grant Reinstatement, 1 year later

Justice Policy Institute Follow 5 min read · Aug 7, 2024

By: Tessa Crowley & Fatimah Khan

Background on Pell Grants

Police Do Not Make Our Communities Safer

Justice Policy Institute Follow 3 min read · Oct 9, 2024

Closing Prisons: A Crucial Step Toward Equity and Economic Justice

Justice Policy Institute Follow 2 min read · Dec 18, 2024

Urgent Need for Overdose Treatment Centers for Returning Prisoners

Follow 3 min read · Sep 4, 2024

Maryland's Cannabis Pardons and the Future of the Drug War

Justice Policy Institute Follow 3 min read · Jul 2, 2024

By: Oliver Alferness

Two weeks ago, Maryland Governor Wes Moore pardoned over 175,000 cannabis-related convictions in the largest state-level pardon in US history. These pardons, which coincide with Juneteenth, highlight the disproportionate impact of these convictions on Black and brown people in Maryland. And as we prepare for July 4th, the pardons further celebrate freedom. This executive order continues the recent pattern of state-level mass pardons and expungements for cannabis-related offenses and follows Biden's 2022 pardon of federal cannabis offenses, in which he urged states to do the same. Approximately 100,000 people are expected to be pardoned.

Research that Drives Change

In a year marked by political polarization, rising carceral responses to social issues, and renewed threats to advances in youth justice, JPI's research offered needed clarity, context, and common-sense solutions.

Our 2024 publications addressed urgent questions about how to create real community safety, introduced data-driven alternatives to incarceration, uplifted impacted voices, and equipped policymakers with actionable strategies. These reports continued JPI's nearly 30-year legacy of producing tools that spark dialogue, inform legislation, and advance equitable justice.

- **50th Anniversary of the JJDP: Infographic Series** - To honor five decades of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, JPI released a six-part infographic series charting the law's evolution, its impact on youth justice, and our contributions to youth justice reform the past 20 years. The series is a powerful educational tool and call to action for youth-centered justice.
- **Building a Brighter Future: A Plan to Invest in DC's Emerging Adults** - This report offers a bold alternative to punishment-driven policies, outlining a community-based vision for supporting 18 to 24-year-olds in Washington, DC. Grounded in data and lived experience, it presents a strategic framework focused on education, job training, and opportunity, demonstrating how investments in young people strengthen public safety and equity.
- **The Right Investment 2.0: How Maryland Can Create Safe and Healthy Communities** - Integrating more than 60 social and economic indicators, this interactive report reveals how decades of disinvestment have fueled incarceration in Baltimore neighborhoods. The tool empowers users to visualize the devastating impact of misinformed policy choices and makes the case for redirecting resources toward community development, wellness and safety.
- **Reentry Services Guidebook & Organizational Directory** - Developed with Changing Perceptions, a partner organization that supports returning citizens, this guide supports Washington, DC's returning citizens with up-to-date resources and access to critical community services including housing, healthcare, employment, and more. By prioritizing immediate, coordinated reentry support, the guide helps reduce recidivism and foster stability for returning citizens and communities alike.

How the Adolescent Brain Shapes Behavior

The Developing Adolescent Brain

The brain continues to mature into a person's mid-20s, especially the prefrontal cortex, which governs decision-making, impulse control, and planning. Youth are more prone to impulsive actions and misinterpreting emotions due to the faster development of emotional centers relative to the slower growth of cognitive control.



Teens, Peers, and the Influences

Adolescents are strongly influenced by the presence of peers often increasing the strength of family support and creating and promoting healthier development.

The Hidden Costs

Adolescents are more susceptible to the crucial phase of brain development. Disruptive brain pathways, leading to long-term consequences.

Supreme Court's Recognition

More Risks

Because they don't understand the risks involved, the heightened activity in reward centers make them prioritize immediate gratification.

Supreme Court Reshaped Youth Justice

The Supreme Court reshaped youth justice by separating youth and adults. Key cases include *Roper v. Simmons* (2005) recognized youth as less culpable, emphasizing their immaturity, susceptibility to peer pressure, and greater potential for rehabilitation.

JUSTICE POLICY INSTITUTE

StrategyForward ADVISORS



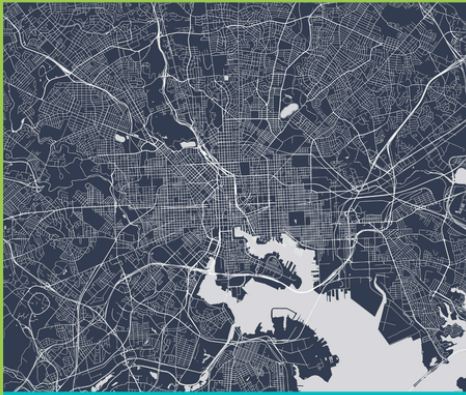
BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE: A plan to invest in DC's emerging adults

MAY 2024



Reentry Services Guidebook & Organizational Directory

The Right Investment 2.0 How Maryland Can Create Safe and Healthy Communities



JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



1966

Kent v. United States
"The juvenile court movement was founded on the concept that children, unlike adults, are susceptible to rehabilitation and are not fully responsible for their actions."



1967

In re Gault v. United States
"The basic premise of the juvenile court system is that children are different from adults - less mature, less responsible, and more amenable to rehabilitation."



1967 - 1974

SCOTUS provided legal protections, but little guidance for practice within the system. There were no standards for how children should be treated, unfettered discretion for judges, and unconscionable outcomes for kids.



1974

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act
To address the concerns of the youth justice system, the 93rd United States Congress passed JJDPA on September 7, 1974.

Youth in Solitary & The JJDPA



Hard Numbers about Kids

About 60,000 children are held in youth facilities on any given day. 15% reported experiencing solitary confinement. Hundreds more kids are likely held in solitary in adult prisons and jails.

Movement for Change

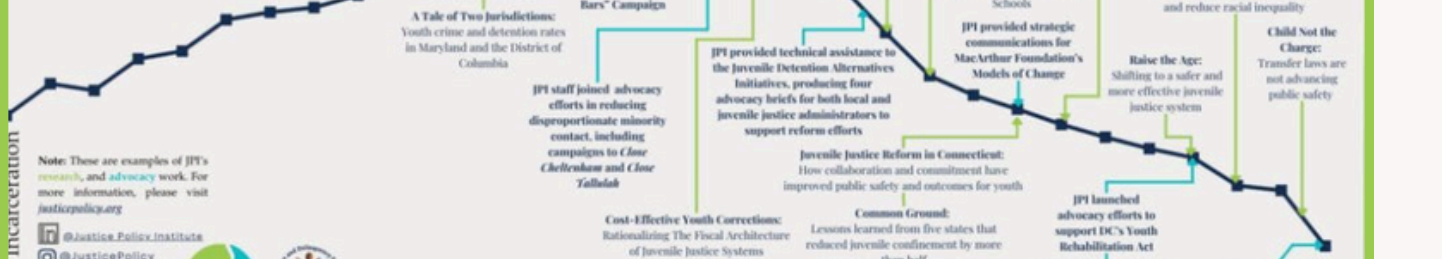
Jurisdictions across the country are ending or dramatically restricting the use of solitary for young people.

Best policy changes include ending solitary confinement in all forms and by all names beyond three or more hours. Other practices include limiting solitary to minutes and hours.

Reimagining Youth Justice: JPI's 25+ year commitment to system reform

For more than 25 years, JPI has been at the forefront of research, and advocacy, championing a smarter, fairer, and more equitable youth justice system.

Infographic 2 of 6



How the JJDPA Changed Youth Justice in States



Follow along this fall as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the JJDPA and observe Youth Justice Month by releasing a series of infographics. Check out justicepolicy.org to see what you've missed!

State-level Efforts

- Arkansas:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- California:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Colorado:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Connecticut:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Illinois:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Indiana:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Iowa:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Kansas:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Michigan:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Minnesota:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Mississippi:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Montana:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Nebraska:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Nevada:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New Hampshire:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New Jersey:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New Mexico:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New York:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- North Carolina:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- North Dakota:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Ohio:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Oklahoma:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Oregon:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Rhode Island:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Texas:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Utah:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Vermont:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Virginia:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Washington:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- West Virginia:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Wisconsin:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Wyoming:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes

Continued Challenges

- Racial Disparities:** Black are youth are 4.7 times more likely to be confined by their white peers.
- Compliance and Monitoring:** Compliance is challenging in states with large populations in secure facilities, often direct resources from more impact initiatives.
- Funding Limitations:** Federal funding decreased -41.5% between 2000 and 2020.

More Work is Needed

Click below to read more...

- Arkansas:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- California:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Colorado:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Connecticut:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Illinois:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Indiana:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Iowa:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Kansas:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Michigan:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Minnesota:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Mississippi:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Montana:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Nebraska:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Nevada:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New Hampshire:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New Jersey:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New Mexico:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- New York:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- North Carolina:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- North Dakota:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Ohio:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Oklahoma:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Oregon:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Rhode Island:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Texas:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Utah:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Vermont:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Virginia:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Washington:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- West Virginia:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Wisconsin:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes
- Wyoming:** Diversion Programs, Mental Health Focus, Legislative Changes

Smart, Safe and Fair

- Behavioral Health:** Training, Support from Youth
- Community-Based:** Support from Youth
- Alternatives to Detention:** Rehabilitation in Focus
- Smart, Safe and Fair:** Strategies to prevent youth violence, heal victims of crime, and reduce racial inequality

Community Events that Move Policy and People

In 2024, the Justice Policy Institute expanded its reach by hosting and participating in powerful events that sparked dialogue, deepened understanding, and advanced community-driven solutions. Through film screenings, panel discussions, webinars, and national summits, JPI brought together directly impacted individuals, advocates, and policymakers to challenge outdated narratives and reimagine justice systems.

Each event was rooted in our belief that community is the foundation of reform and that policy transformation happens when people come together to listen, learn, and act.

Kemba Film Screenings and Panel Discussions

JPI hosted two powerful screenings of *Kemba*, the BET+ film inspired by the real-life story of Kemba Smith Pradia. The screenings centered lived experience and the urgent need for justice reform:

- DC Jail, Young Men Emerging Unit (April 2024): In collaboration with Free Minds Book Club and Georgetown's Prisons and Justice Initiative, JPI hosted a screening and panel for incarcerated youth and scholars. Kemba Smith Pradia, formerly incarcerated leaders including Joel Castón and Shameka Hayes, and JPI Executive Director Jasmine Tyler led a discussion about systemic inequities, redemption, and the power of second chances.
- Virginia Union University (November 2024): Co-hosted with Virginia Humanities, this screening drew more than 100 attendees and featured a dynamic panel including Smith Pradia, JPI's Director of Advocacy Keith Wallington, and Richmond community leaders. The panel highlighted community-based reform and the personal and collective responsibility we share to fight for lasting change.

Book Talk with James Forman Jr.

On July 18, Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Yale Law Professor James Forman Jr. joined JPI for a timely conversation about his latest book, *Dismantling Mass Incarceration: A Handbook for Change*. Held in Washington, D.C and streamed virtually, the event brought together legal professionals, community members, and advocates for a rich dialogue on strategies to build a justice system rooted in equity and accountability.



One Million Experiments: Film Screening and Panel

In partnership with Georgetown’s McCourt School Policy Innovation Lab, JPI hosted a lunch screening of One Million Experiments: The Film, exploring creative, community-led approaches to public safety. The panel, moderated by JPI’s Jasmine Tyler, featured JPI Fellow Joel Castón and leaders from DC Justice Lab, BreakFree Education, Free Minds, and the National Reentry Network. Together, they offered bold visions for what public safety and justice can look like without relying on incarceration.



[Watch the full panel discussion »](#)

Drug-Induced Homicide Webinars: Shifting the Narrative

As part of our nearly three-decade effort to challenge punitive drug policies, JPI co-hosted two webinars examining the harmful impact of Maryland’s Victoria and Scottie’s Law:

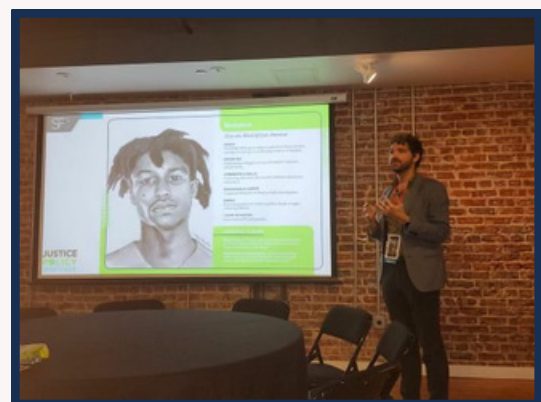
- Part I (October 17): Public health expert Professor Leo Beletsky detailed how drug-induced homicide laws deter life-saving interventions and escalate overdose deaths, making the case for health-centered solutions over criminalization.
- Part II (November 14): Moderated by JPI Advocacy Associate Shekhinah Braveheart, this emotionally powerful session featured families who have lost loved ones to overdose and drug criminalization. Panelists called for policy shifts toward treatment, harm reduction, and ending stigma.

Inside & Out: The Humanities and Mass Incarceration

In March, JPI attended the three-day conference in Chicago alongside 24 state humanities councils and their community partners. JPI’s Jasmine Tyler moderated a Re-Entry Support & the Humanities panel, exploring the challenges facing returning citizens and ways the humanities can support formerly incarcerated people as they reintegrate into communities.

From Silos to Solutions

JPI participated in the See Forever Foundation - Maya Angelou Schools’ inaugural national convening, From Silos to Solutions, where Paul Ashton co-led a workshop on coordinated support for justice-involved youth and [Jasmine Tyler delivered an inspiring keynote address](#) challenging approaches to system-impacted young people.



Book Talk with Philip V. McHarris

JPI's Jasmine Tyler joined author Philip V. McHarris at Politics and Prose in Washington, DC, for a thought-provoking discussion on his new book *Beyond Policing*, exploring research, personal experience, and transformative approaches to public safety and justice.



Book Talk with Dara Baldwin

Jasmine Tyler sat down with author Dara Baldwin to discuss the release of her book, *To Be A Problem: A Black Woman's Survival of the Disability Rights Movement*. The discussion focused on Baldwin's insights on intersectionality policy agendas, disability justice, and the challenges faced by people with disabilities within the criminal justice system.

Celebrating 50 Years of the JJPDA

At the 53rd Annual Legislative Conference hosted by the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, JPI's Jasmine Tyler joined a panel with OJJDP Administrator Liz Ryan, Congressmen Bobby Scott, JPI Board Member Bobby Vassar, and Human Rights for Kids Executive Director James Dold, marking the 50th anniversary of the JJPDA, discussing its history, reauthorization, and the future of youth justice reform alongside key leaders and experts.

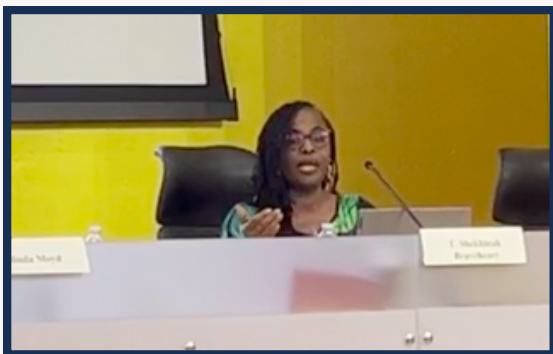


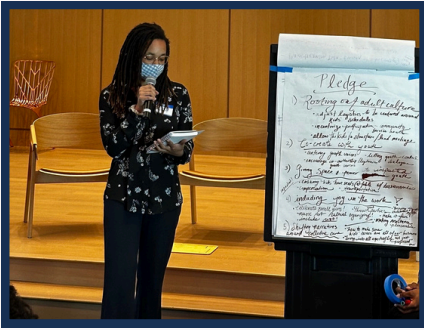
Creating Safer Communities Panel

On September 24, JPI's Keith Wallington and Shekhinah Braveheart joined partners at the Creating Safer Communities: Why Mass Incarceration Fails panel in Silver Spring, Maryland, to discuss building safer, more equitable communities without reliance on mass incarceration.

Criminal Legal Reform Advocates' Retreat

On October 7, JPI's Shekhinah Braveheart and Keith Wallington spoke at the Criminal Legal Reform Advocates' Retreat, highlighting the need for parole reform in Maryland and opposing the \$1 billion Baltimore City Jail project, advocating instead for investments in housing, education, and public health.





Say It Loud: Narrative Summit

JPI’s Seaira Wainaina and Paul Ashton attended the “Say It Loud: Narrative Summit”, co-hosted by Thrive Under 25, Every Student Every Day, and the Youth Justice Project Coalitions, to collaborate with DC youth advocates on shaping narratives that center care and justice for young people.

Fighting for Justice: The Path to Exoneration Webinar

On November 4, JPI’s Troy Burner joined justice reform champions for the Fighting for Justice webinar, discussing the harms of mass incarceration and the urgent need for prosecutorial accountability.



JPI in Boston: Emerging Adult Justice Project Site Convening

JPI’s Paul Ashton and Seaira Wainaina attended Columbia University’s Emerging Adult Developmental Framework convening in Boston, where Paul presented JPI’s work in DC to implement recommendations from JPI’s *Building a Brighter Future* report and strengthen coordinated responses for justice-involved emerging adults.



Daughters Screening and Discussion

JPI’s Jasmine Tyler participated in a special screening of the documentary film *Daughters*, followed by a powerful discussion alongside Dr. Chelsea Hunsucker of Prison Fellowship and Erica Livingston from Deloitte Consulting LLP, on justice reform, highlighting the need for redemption, second chances, and the impact on families.

NRWC Annual Conference

Jasmine Tyler, Keith Wallington, and Seaira Wainaina attended the 2024 National Reentry Workforce Collaborative (NRWC) Annual Conference in Denver, where JPI’s economic and public safety analysis and framework helped anchor key conversations on employment equity, highlighting JPI’s leadership as a second-chance employer and its commitment to advancing inclusive reentry strategies rooted in justice and opportunity.



NACOLE Annual Conference

JPI's Paul Ashton attended the 2024 NACOLE Annual Conference in Tucson, Arizona, where he participated in the panel “The Critical Role of Training for Board and Commission Members in Civilian Oversight” as Chair of D.C.’s Police Complaints Board.



OJJDP 2024 National Conference on Youth Justice

JPI was proud to participate in the OJJDP 2024 National Conference on Youth Justice: Shaping the Next 50 Years, joining advocates and leaders to discuss the future of youth justice. The conference fostered meaningful dialogue on past progress, ongoing challenges, and strategies to build a more just and equitable system for young people. JPI staff joined youth justice advocates and practitioners from across the country, including former JPI Executive Directors Vincent Schiraldi and Marc Schindler.



JPI in the News



THE BALTIMORE BANNER 2/26/2024

2 officers, 200 prisoners: Maryland's prison population grows amid staffing shortage

One of the ways you can address this is by fixing parole and opening the release valve so more folks are starting to come home.



~Keith Wallington



THE BALTIMORE SUN 5/16/2024

Commentary:

A lifeline for Maryland families affected by violent crime like mine

This legislation is a crucial step toward acknowledging the profound impact that violent crime has on families and providing them with the support they need to heal. It helps ensure that families are not left to bear the financial and emotional burdens alone during the most challenging times. For families like mine and others most impacted by the legal system, this reform is more than just legislation — it's a lifeline. It represents hope and the chance for healing, even in the face of unimaginable loss.

~ Keith Wallington

The Imprint YOUTH & FAMILY NEWS 7/25/2024

New Resource Aims to Bring More Adolescent Brain Science Into Juvenile Courtrooms

Still, Justice Policy Institute Executive Director Jasmine Tyler said courts should do more to build on the idea that “kids aren’t just little adults.

The DC Line
News, Views & Events

8/16/2024

Courtney Stewart and Jasmine L. Tyler: We can transform public safety in DC by prioritizing prevention over punishment

Perhaps most urgently, the District requires better leadership to expand violence prevention efforts and foster coordination among agencies — all of which is currently lacking.

LoudounNow

9/3/2024

Letter: Jasmine Tyler

I urge the Loudoun County School Board to pass this policy. No parent should have to bury their child, and no child should have to lose a friend when a life-saving solution like naloxone is quite literally within reach.

Commentary:

Baltimore needs investment in communities, not a jail

In 2015, the Justice Policy Institute released a report showing that Maryland spends more money incarcerating people from communities like Sandtown-Winchester than anywhere else in the state. This is hardly surprising when you look at the conditions in these neighborhoods.

The New York Times

The Marijuana Landscape 10/19/2024

What America needs now is truth, transparency and science-based policies. Federal descheduling of cannabis is critical to enabling the research necessary for a safe, well-regulated market as well and addressing historic harms. Fear and misinformation only exacerbate confusion.

Jasmine Tyler
Washington

The writer is the executive director of the Justice Policy Institute



REVCOMMUNITY 10/15/2024

Leaders in Action: T. Shekhinah Braveheart and Justice Policy Institute

JPI's T. Shekhinah Braveheart was featured in Revolutionnaire's "Mina's Meetings: Leaders in Action" series, sharing JPI's nearly 30-year history of advocating for justice reform and uplifting the voices of system-impacted individuals.

So7 E11: We Are Still The Majority: A Post-Election Conversation 11/21/2024

JPI's Jasmine Tyler joined Pod for the Cause from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights to discuss the post-election landscape, civil rights, and justice reform.



MARYLAND MATTERS 12/26/2024

Commentary:

Why Maryland needs geriatric and medical parole reform

👉 *Compassionate release is a smarter, more sustainable approach. Supporting this legislation is not about being "soft on crime." It is about being smart recognizing that many of those aging in Maryland's prisons today are not the same people they were when they entered decades ago. This reform reflects the values of redemption, fairness, and humanity.* 🗨️

~ T. Shekhinah Braveheart

New Leaders, Shared Commitment

In 2024, JPI took significant steps to strengthen its leadership and expand its capacity to advocate for equitable justice policies nationally and locally. These efforts included welcoming a dedicated and inspiring new Executive Director and broadening the expertise and diversity of our Board of Directors. Together, these leaders bring unparalleled passion, experience, and commitment to advancing JPI’s mission.

Welcoming Our New Executive Director

This year, JPI proudly welcomed **Jasmine L. Tyler** as Executive Director. A visionary leader in justice reform, Jasmine brings more than two decades of experience in policy advocacy, community engagement, and movement-building. Her career spans work with leading civil rights organizations and movements, academic teaching on race and criminal justice, and groundbreaking legislative victories. A long-time champion for racial equity, she is committed to advancing transformative policies that center the voices of directly impacted communities. Under her leadership, JPI is poised to deepen its impact and accelerate meaningful reforms in the fight for justice.

Expanding Our Board

Kanya Bennett – Board Member

Kanya Bennett is the Managing Director of Government Affairs at The Leadership Conference, a coalition of more than 220 organizations serving as a strategic hub of the civil rights movement. Originally a native of Chicago, Kanya has spent more than a decade advancing civil rights policy in her adopted home of Washington, DC. Kanya is a dedicated social justice advocate. When she’s not shaping policy on Capitol Hill, she’s supporting her biggest team on the court as a proud basketball “momager.”

Tyler Lewis – Board Member

Tyler Lewis is a communications strategist with extensive experience in message development, brand identity, and public advocacy. A leader in civil rights communications, he has spearheaded initiatives on education equity and voter mobilization. He currently serves as Managing Director of Communications at Third Sector and as Board Chair of Rethink Media, using his expertise to amplify underrepresented voices and drive progressive change.

Jerónimo Saldaña – Board Member

Jerónimo Saldaña is a Chicano digital strategist with over a decade of experience advancing criminal justice and immigration reform. As the founding Co-Director of the Justice Reform Collaborative at LatinoJustice PRLDEF, he worked to build Latinx power and combat the criminalization of communities of color. Jerónimo specializes in using digital tools and creative spectacle to amplify campaigns and engage mass audiences. His career spans grassroots organizing, grantmaking philanthropy, organized labor, and national legislative advocacy.

Ebony Sparkes – Board Member

Ebony Sparkes is an event strategist and Founder of Sparkes Event Solutions, specializing in corporate event planning, strategic marketing, and logistics. With expertise in contract negotiations and audience engagement, she designs high-impact experiences that align with organizational missions. Her work ensures seamless events that foster meaningful connections and lasting impact.

Luz Villar – Board Member

Luz Villar is a social justice advocate and former senior aide to U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley, where she worked on public safety, trauma, and child welfare policy. She helped launch the first civic engagement course at a Massachusetts correctional institution and supported efforts to reunite families in the foster care system. Recognized for her advocacy, Luz holds a graduate degree in Public Policy Management from Georgetown University and remains committed to challenging systemic inequities.

Chris White – Board Member

Chris White is the Deputy Executive Director of the National Bankers Association Foundation, leading initiatives to support minority-owned banks nationwide. With a background in community development finance and economic justice advocacy, he previously co-led racial equity programs at Georgetown University's Coalition for Racial Equity and Democratic Economy. A cum laude graduate of Georgetown University, he has also served as a diplomatic security contractor for the U.S. State Department.

Board of Directors



Katharine Huffman, Board Chair
Principal, The Raben Group
Executive Director, The Square One Project



Kanya Bennett
Managing Director of Government
Affairs, The Leadership Conference on
Civil and Human Rights



Marcus Bullock
Founder and CEO, Flikshop



Albert Gore, III
Executive Director, Zero Emission
Transportation Association



Tyler Lewis
Managing Director of
Communications, Third Sector



Angela Modrick, Treasurer
Financial Controller, American
Bird Conservancy



Jerónimo Saldaña
Virtual Events Director,
OnPoint Studios



Michael J. Satin
Member, Miller & Chevalier
Chartered



Ebony Sparkes
CEO and Founder of Sparkes
Event Solutions



Bobby N. Vassar
Assistant to the President,
Bay Aging



Luz Villar



Chris White
Deputy Executive Director,
National Bankers Association
Foundation

Leadership and Staff



Jasmine L. Tyler
Executive Director



Paul Ashton
Deputy Executive Director



T. Shekhinah Braveheart
Advocacy Associate



Troy Burner
Associate



Joel Castón
Fellow



Ryan King
Director of Research



Jeremy Kittredge
Research and Strategic
Initiatives Manager



Seaira Wainaina
Associate, Organizational
Impact



Keith Wallington
Director of Advocacy

JUSTICE POLICY INSTITUTE

Justice Policy Institute is dedicated to reducing the use of incarceration and the justice system by promoting fair and effective policies.

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